

Message Text

PAGE 01 SEOUL 03099 012229Z

62

ACTION EA-10

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SUBJECT: ROK PRESS REACTION TO FALL OF SAIGON

1. SURRENDER OF GVN DOMINATED FRONT PAGES OF ROK
NEWSPAPERS APRIL 30 AND MAY 1. WIRE SERVICE ACCOUNTS
OF FINAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SAIGON RECEIVED MAJOR
TREATMENT, COMPLEMENTED BY ARTICLES ON ASIAN REACTION
AND SPECULATION ON PRG POLICIES. PRESS ALSO REPORTED
SECRETARY'S APRIL 29 NEWS CONFERENCE REMARKS ON
CONTINUING IMPORTANCE OF US-ROK DEFENSE TREATY AND
REASSESSMENT OF ASIAN POLICY. FATE OF SEVENTY ROK
NATIONALS REPORTEDLY LEFT IN VIET-NAM WAS ALSO TOUCHED
ON IN ROK PRESS, WHICH HAD NO FIRM INFORMATION ON
EVACUATION OF KOREANS.

2. FIRST EDITORIAL REACTION CAME FROM SEMI-OFFICIAL
KYUNGHYANG SHINMUN, WHICH SAID FALL OF GVN INEVITABLE
BY TIME OF THIEU RESIGNATION, SINCE SUCCESSFUL
NEGOTIATION WITH COMMUNISTS REQUIRES POWER BALANCE
AND VICTORY OVER COMMUNISTS REQUIRES NATIONAL SOLIDARITY
AND UNITY. PAPER NOTED THAT ONLY RESULT OF POST-THIEU
NEGOTIATION ATTEMPTS WAS PURCHASE OF TIME FOR AMERICAN
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PAGE 02 SEOUL 03099 012229Z

WITHDRAWAL. OTHER EDITORIAL HAVE EXPRESSED SHOCK AT
FALL OF GVN AND HAVE SUMMONED FAMILIAR THEMES TO ACCOUNT FOR IT:
LACK OF UNITY IN SOUTH VIETNAM, FAILURE OF US COMMITMENT, AND
US HELPLESSNESS IN RAPIDLY CHANGING SITUATION. THEY ALSO

RELATED FALL OF INDOCHINA TO KOREAN SITUATION, SAYING THAT
ULTIMATE UNIFICATION OF INDOCHINA UNDER HANOI REGIME WILL
ENCOURAGE MORE AGGRESSIVE ACTION BY PYONGYANG. HOWEVER,
OFFICIAL SEOUL SHINMUN SAID ROK CAN REPEL NORTH KOREAN
AGGRESSION WITH "OUR FIRM POSTURE AND DETERMINATION."
GVN SURRENDER, IT SAID, RESULTED NOT FROM US AID CUT BUT
"FROM HABIT OF RELYING ON FOREIGN POWER."

3. PRESS REPORTED THAT PRESIDENT PARK RESPONDED TO
NEWS OF FALL OF SAIGON BY COMMENTING TO TRADE PROMOTION
MEETING HE WAS ATTENDING THAT ROK SHOULD WATCH FATE
OF THOSE SOUTH VIETNAMESE WHO HAD BEEN INVOLVED IN
ANTI-GVN ACTIVITIES, TO SEE IF THEY CAN CONTINUE TO
CLAIM HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOM NOW THAT COMMUNISTS
HAVE TAKEN OVER. HE ALSO WONDERED WHAT THOSE DISSIDENTS
WHO ESCAPED WOULD THINK ABOUT NOW AS THEY ROAM AROUND AS
REFUGEES.
SNEIDER

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